

Fight Night by Carrera_os

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Summary:

Day 21 Fire

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It is fight night, the school's bending team is going up against Hawkins' rival school and while Billy does not have any investment in this perceived rivalry he does like fight night. He always likes the chance to show off his skills as a bender and make someone else look like a fool while he is at it. There is an added bonus he does not get during practices in the gym after school, he gets to watch Steve Harrington actually put some effort into his bending for once. Normally during practice it is like he spends the whole time playing a game and as pretty as that is to watch Steve laughing and joking as he bends water against his opponent, the folly falls away on fight nights, for once seriousness taking up residence when he hits the mats.

Fight Night

Author's Note:

Day Twenty-one Fire from the Harringrove April Prompts

Smoke Show

It is fight night, the school's bending team is going up against Hawkins' rival school and while Billy does not have any investment in this perceived rivalry he does like fight night. He always likes the chance to show off his skills as a bender and make someone else look like a fool while he is at it. There is an added bonus he does not get during practices in the gym after school, he gets to watch Steve Harrington actually put some effort into his bending for once. Normally during practice it is like he spends the whole time playing a game and as pretty as that is to watch Steve laughing and joking as he bends water against his opponent, the folly falls away on fight nights, for once seriousness taking up residence when he hits the mats.

Billy has figured out by now that Steve still does not really care whether they win or lose but he, like Billy has his dad in the stands expecting him to win, has overheard the man berating Steve for not winning sooner, for not taking his opponent down harder. Billy is watching the tense line of Steve's back as he stretches trying to work out the tension filling him after their coach finally yells at Harrington senior to take a seat in the bleachers or get out of his gym and Billy cannot help himself saunters over and hip checks him. Steve stumbles and Billy might let him fall to the floor but he is in a decent mood despite his father being in the stands. He has left Billy alone tonight, so he catches Steve's arm before he can topple, steadyng him.

Steve does not acknowledge Billy bumping into him and being the reason he almost fell, just bumps back into him as soon as his feet are

steady again, more relaxed than he had been a few moments ago. “Ready to kick, Pembroke’s ass?” Steve sends him a little knowing smirk, he already knows the answer, Billy thrives on fight nights and they all know it, even the rival team, several of the members have been eyeing Billy with trepidation, his fiery temper on and off the mat no secret.

“I’m always ready to kick some ass.” Billy offers with a grin, it falls when tension shoots back through Steve as a man calls him over voice sharp and commanding, their coach too distracted to block him from demanding Steve’s attention. Billy glances over his shoulder to see Steve’s father, he has never exactly met the man, he always shoots Billy a sneer anytime they make eye contact when he is anywhere near Steve. Billy knows from Tommy that the man like his own father is not a bender, both of them getting it from their mothers sides and like Billy’s father Mr. Harrington is resentful of it. Tommy had a lot to say about the man and his relationship with Steve, none of it particularly good. Billy frowns looking for their coach, finding him caught up in conversation with another parent as Steve leaves his side and the man pulls him further away, probably to yell at him for something again, Billy has flames flickering over his hands as he watches Steve and his father argue.

When the matches start they pull Billy’s focus back to the ring set up and Billy feels adrenaline start to boil up in him as he watches the first match. Carol, a fellow fire bender, wipes the floor with the earth bender Pembroke sets against her. The poor kid does not even get a chance to try before he is being tossed out of the ring by Carol, she is not known for her showmanship or patience in a fight, she hates breaking a sweat. Still people enjoy betting on just how fast she will win and tonight is no different as Billy sees money passing hands between several people in the bleachers.

Steve finally breaks away from his father, a tense line as he marches up to the mat, as soon as he is on it though his attitude shifts, he literally shakes out all the tension, something he does every time he hits the mat and as he does it his movements slide into a fluid grace. Billy loves watching Steve bend, it is like watching an intricate dance

and Billy has never actually seen him lose. The fire bender across from Steve on the mat is a hulking kid who uses more energy than necessary as he tries to keep Steve from moving in too close by tossing fireballs at him. Steve doges them all, dancing around the ring as he turns it into a cat and mouse game putting on a show for the crowd and the kid gets angrier and angrier putting out more smoke than fire and when he thinks he has one, thinks he got a hit in, Steve finally knocks him out of the ring with a well placed smack of his water whip. Steve is victorious, having gotten nothing more than a little ash smearing his arm.

Most of the gym and their teammates are cheering, excitement high after the show Steve put on. Billy tosses an arm around Steve's shoulders when he comes out of the ring pressing a towel into his hands and ignoring the sweat slicking his arm, resisting the urge to rub that ash away himself "And you call me the show off." Billy teases, arm going a little tight around Steve's neck and he tries not to think too hard about how Steve smells like smoke but not because of him. That is dangerous jealous territory. Instead Billy pushes Steve in Carol's direction when he is called to the ring, glad to see her rub the ash away since Steve seems content to let it remain.

Billy, like Steve puts on a show, cannot resist showing off especially with Steve right there but it is a shorter one, Billy does not have the patience to draw it out as much as Steve does. Not after watching Steve go up against another fire bender, not with the scent of fire on his skin that is not Billy's. It makes his fire burn hotter and the air bender he is up against tries, they try really hard but Billy has pent up aggression to burn out of him and unfortunately the air bender gets the brunt of it. They make it a few minutes before Billy sets their shirt on fire knocking them out of the ring with a well placed kick while they dance around in a panic trying to put it out, in the moment forgetting all about their abilities.

Billy heads off the mat going right for Steve and Carol, something other than his fire warming his gut as Steve passes him that towel back and Billy tosses it over one shoulder throwing a sweaty arm around Steve who just rolls his eyes. Carol is quick to move away

with a pinched up frown and a “You both smell” wandering off to no doubt make out with Tommy under the bleachers or in a supply closet. Billy sticks to Steve’s side, in his space as they watch the rest of the matches play out, everyone cheering for their own teams. At the end of the night Hawkins high takes home the win and it should be all celebration but Neil Hargrove and Bradly Harrington are both brooding, a cloud practically hanging around them as they stomp over to their sons, their teammates parting for them.

“Billy in the ring.” Billy’s brow pinches up, tension in his back, he knows whatever they want cannot be good, can smell liquor on his father’s breath when he moves closer into his space, mustache twitching as he scrunches his face up. “You’re going to wipe the floor with the Harrington kid or you’re going to regret it.” He hisses low enough that Billy is probably the only one who can hear him, with the way Mr. Harrington and Steve are arguing.

“I’m tired, I don’t want to fight another match, especially against my own teammate! Are you drunk again?” Steve hisses, his father’s face turning purple with anger and Billy feels flames dance over his fingers as the man grabs Steve’s arm in a tight hold, makes him flinch as he gives a little shake, purple face moving closer to Steve’s ear to no doubt threaten.

“What’s the matter Harrington, forget to teach your boy how to have a little respect.” Neil baits and Billy feels the hairs at the back of his neck prick, Mr. Harrington looks pissed and he can see his fingers digging in harder against Steve’s skin. Can see Steve’s own eyes narrow as he looks at Neil, ignoring his own father and Billy is afraid Steve is going to do something stupid, is going to try and show up Neil with a jeering crowd, something Billy know will not end well. Neil might not do anything tonight if Steve has something to say, not his style, he would instead wait for him to be alone and vulnerable to strike and Billy cannot stand the thought of the aftermath.

“Get in the ring Harrington, what are you afraid of?” Billy jeers, pulling Steve’s attention to him where it is safe and most of the

crowd is all loud and jostling around them unaware of the real danger, of the tension between them.

Steve's eyes swivel to him the slightest cock to his head as he looks at Billy with something he does not really understand before he sets his jaw and pulls his arm free from his father. "Don't think I'm not telling mom about this." He hisses, jabbing his dad in the chest before quickly moving out of reach before the man can get a swat in but Billy still wants to throw a fireball at the man's face for the attempt. "Get in the ring Hargrove I'm going to wipe the floor with you!" Steve demands the crowd hooting and hollering around them even louder than before.

Billy moves to follow after him but Neil grabs his arm stopping him, mouth by his ear again, mustache tickling and sour breath making Billy's gut churn. "You better not lose, boy." Neil threatens in his ear like Billy needs the threat voiced, like it is not always just hanging there over his head when Neill is around. Billy does not bother responding with words, anything he says will just get him more of the same so he wrenches out of Neil's hold and marches to the ring.

'*You okay?*' Steve mouths at him when they are across from each other, he has already shaken off the tension but Billy is having trouble doing the same, he does not want to fight Steve like this, not when it is real because Neil will not be satisfied with a tap out and Billy cannot lose, the consequences will be painful. Billy just shakes his head and watches the play of emotions cross Steve's face as they dance around the ring waiting for their exasperated couch to come call the match, the ref having already left.

"You boys sure you want to do this? I can just have your fathers kicked out." He offers when he comes out on the mat, the crowd laughing as the two aforementioned men scoff.

"We're doing this." Billy says hard, he would very much like to see their father's kicked out and to drag Steve off the mat so they can get cleaned up, maybe drag him to the diner to celebrate their win

instead of this but Neil will not let it go if they do not do this now, will keep angling for them to fight one another, better to get it over with before he can decide to up the ante. Steve's face settles on something Billy cannot quite read but he nods his head in agreement and their coach calls a start to the match.

Steve draws water up around him, dancing around and dodging when Billy occasionally throws a fireball at him. He is not attacking, waiting for an opening as they move around the mat circling one another. The thing is Billy has watched Steve fight over and over now, he knows his moves, his tells, can tell when he is being led into a trap. Part of Billy wants to win, needs to, if he wants to avoid Neil's wrath but a bigger part of him does not want to risk hurting Steve and lets himself be led flames hot as they dance over his skin.

Billy lets the fire build around his fists as Steve starts spraying water at him, leading him closer, forcing him the way he wants lest he ends up drenched. Billy has seen him do this to plenty of other fire benders, move them close and then push them out of the ring with a wave of water. He should not let himself be led at all but he plays along, when Steve moves to get ready for the wave Billy moves in closer, ready to make it look good.

Billy is expecting Steve to do his flaming fist the way he always does in practice, expects him to change his movements, make the water he is bending sweep Billy off his feet. Steve does none of that, does not move at all, he lets Billy's burning fist catch him hard and burning, Billy can smell the flesh sear, Steve's pain filled shout before he finally defends himself bringing water up between them, pushing Billy back.

Billy stares wide eyed at Steve whose shirt is burned away, where Billy burned him, skin welting up already, bubbled and red and it looks painful. The coach calls the match, declares Billy the victor even as he is angry about him actually wounding Steve. Steve shoots Billy a little reassuring smile, a discrete thumbs up before he disappears in the crowd dodging his father as he makes his way to

the locker room.

Billy has anger in his belly, fire coiled tight because Steve stupid pretty boy Steve let him win, let Billy's fire hit him on purpose, let himself get hurt. Billy ignores the cheering crowd, his father already distracted gloating over Harrington senior and collecting his money, because of course they made a bet on their own kids. Billy clenches his fist resisting shooting flames at the two of them as he pushes through the crowd going after Steve.

"What the fuck were you thinking, I know you could have stopped that." Billy growls as he stomps into the locker room, slamming the door and locking it behind him. He does not want any interruptions. He finds Steve peeling the last of his burnt shirt from his skin, eyes glued to his burned skin and it looks painful. He needs medical attention, why had no one insisted on Steve being looked at by the on call medic that is the man's one job at these matches. Steve needs it wrapped and burn cream, he is going to get an infection with it exposed like that, Billy will not be able to stand it if it gets worse, he did enough damage, it is probably going to scar and Billy hates it.

Steve shrugs and meets Billy's gaze with a wince and a hiss as the tender blistering skin of his shoulder pulls. "Looked like you needed a win with your dad."

"I could have killed you!" Billy shouts, flames dancing over his skin as he follows Steve into the showers still fully clothed, angry and concerned at Steve's stupidity, belly burning when Steve tips his long neck back and laughs.

"I've seen you put out more fire when you are trying to show off than you had going during our fight. You weren't really trying to hurt me." Steve says and yeah that is true but Billy had not expected Steve to know that but of course he does he has seen Billy fight just as many times as Billy has seen him.

"Look at your fucking arm, you fucking idiot you're going to end up with a scar because you didn't put up a fight." Billy hisses angrily, not looking forward to the reminder of hurting Steve that will be scared into his skin, so angry that Steve would risk it, would take that pain for him all because he has picked up on how shitty Billy's dad is. Billy has fire dancing all over threatening to burn his clothes and making the water around them start to evaporate just a touch, he is too focused on his own inner turmoil to realize.

Billy shouts as water crashes over him, flames going out, clothes soaked, hair matted down his face and neck as he stares wide-eyed at Steve. "I don't know why you thought coming in here to yell at me was a good idea asshole, I'm literally surrounded by my element." Steve says cheekily as he grins at Billy, whose mouth twists into a sneer. "I'm fine, you think this is the first time I've been burned? Sure it hurts but I'm a water bender." Steve says it like Billy should understand what that has to do with anything , he just glowers as Steve huffs at him with a shake of his head.

"Just watch, you're getting all worked up over nothing hothead." Steve says as he bends water around his hands before he drags one up over his shoulder, the water coming with it glowing as it covers the wound. Billy goes slack jawed as he watches the skin slowly heal under the water moving closer to get a better look. He was not aware Steve could do that, he has heard about it sure but not every water bender can heal and he has never heard any mention of Steve being able to do it before.

"How long have you been able to do that?" Billy asks as the water moves away revealing pink skin, brushing a hand over it marveling at its smoothness.

"I've been healing scraped knees since my playground days" Steve says with a shrug, shifting a little and Billy realizes how close they are, how naked Steve is. "So I'm not afraid of a little burn," Steve gives him a lopsided smile, dragging his eyes up and down Billy's soaked form "and if you wanted I could always help you douse your

flames in other ways, if you're interested, I don't have to keep using water to get you *wet* .”

Billy blinks for a second, caught off guard by the offer, but he wants, he definitely wants. “What have you got in mind, pretty boy?” Billy asks, moving even closer, pressing into Steve’s space and Steve does not hesitate to catch Billy’s mouth in a kiss that has his belly full of fire as the air around them fills with steam.

-End

Author's Note:

<https://ghostofjellyfishforgotten.tumblr.com/>